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# Watson's Art Journal.

NEW YORK, SATURDAY, JAN. 4, 1868.

PUBLICATION OFFICE, CLINTON HALL, ASTOR PLACE.

## GEORGE F. BRISTOW'S ORATORIO, "DANIEL."

One of the most important events in the musical history of America was the production of an original grand Oratorio by a native composer. The oratorio is one of the highest branches of the musical art, but while it is equal in importance with the Opera and the Symphony, it is in its purpose and inspiration superior to either. To undertake such a work was no light task, and Mr. Bristow, fully appreciating the responsibility, devoted nearly two years to its completion, and we do not hesitate to say that his labors have been crowned with success, that he has produced a great and lasting work.

We do not purpose to review the work this week, reserving our considered opinion for our next issue. We shall content ourselves with simply chronicling the fact of its complete success, under circumstances peculiarly adverse. It will hardly be believed in Europe that a work of such importance as Mr. Bristow's Oratorio of "Daniel" was produced with but a single rehearsal! Yet such was the case, and it speaks not a little of the ability of our musicians and their conductor, Mr. Bristow, when we acknowledge that the performance was good, and, under the circumstances, wonderful. It will hardly be believed, also, that the Press of New York took no notice of the forthcoming work in advance, but left it to introduce itself, with but one sponsor, ourselves. This was caused, we suppose, by that "mysterious influence" which we thought belonged exclusively to the New York Herald; but it seems that the mystery and the influence are spreading, to the exclusion of all that is just and generous in journalism. Further than this, the work was only advertised two days in advance, so that the smallest publicity was given to the performance, and the natural result was an audience in numbers by no means commensurate with the interest and importance of the occasion. This, we presume, arose from one of those "entangling alliances" which secures exclusive interests to one party to the injury of all others, and to the serious detriment of Art. All this is to be regretted, and we can only hope that in the season of earthquakes, eruptions, storms and floods (vide N. Y. Herald), and the lamentable failures of eminent pianists and concert troupes, that the great tidal wave of Art will sweep down the barriers which shelter one set and exclude

all others from the privileges which of right belong to them.

Still "Daniel" was an unquestionable success, receiving a public endorsement more prompt and decided than has been accorded to a work of its class since the production of Mendelssohn's "Elijah." Every one concerned in it seemed to feel a deep personal interest in its success, exerting themselves honestly, earnestly and successfully to that end. Parepa never sung so finely or so strongly, and the same praise must be awarded to the others. The choristers proved themselves the champion singers, and won for their society, The Mendelssohn Union, the leading rank. It was a positive luxury to listen to their fresh, fine voices and to watch their prompt, energetic delivery of the very difficult music with which they were entrusted.

We cordially congratulate Mr. Bristow on the genuine success he has achieved—a success which, added to his previous successes in the highest walks of Art, places him on a level with the first composers of the day. In our next we shall discuss the Oratorio of "Daniel" at length.

## ENGLISH OPERA AT THE ACADEMY OF MUSIC.

Miss Caroline Richings has brought her English Operatic Company to the Academy of Music, to try the strength of the public love of that class of entertainment, but we fear that the Academy is, for the present at least, under a cloud, and that the people are not inclined to enter its august walls in very great crowds. The performances are, however, of such excellence, that they merit the attendance of crowded audiences.

The most notable event of the week was the production of Jules Benedict's romantic Opera, the "Lily of Killarney," a work which met with signal success in England. The subject is ridiculously incongruous in its operatic treatment. For instance, the characters in their speaking moments, indulge in a rich brogue, of a character which will not enable us to state to which county in Ireland they belong, and after saying "Is it to yez I'm spaking?" and "Begorra my darlint," and such kind of phrases, they burst out into grand recitations and arias, in the purest of Saxon! Anything more absurd can hardly be imagined. The fault, however, rests solely with the author, and the singers stand exonerated.

With the music we were very much delighted. It is certainly not the work of genius, but it is flowingly melodious, elegantly constructed, broad and passionate in its expression, and most beautifully instrumented. It is the work of a fine musician, and shows a thorough knowledge of dramatic effect, and a power to rise to the exigencies of the situations. Mr. Benedict has, in the ballads

One of the celebrities present was Miss Rosa O'Toole, pianist to the Viceroy of Ireland. During the exhibition she flourished in the English department, where she gave seventy concerts, her *specialité* being Irish melodies, although her repertoire includes operatic and classic selections. On this occasion she sung Cherubini's Ave Maria and Moore's charmingly pathetic song "The Harp that once through Tara's Halls." In the latter, her voice expressed much more sympathy with the rich, ballad style than with the severe, classic Ave Maria. There was also a Norwegian pianist who played the national airs of his country. These savage Northern melodies were an interesting novelty, recalling to my mind the mournful harp of Ossian. Mr. Haner also contributed two gems to this delightful entertainment, first playing Prudent's lovely, imaginative "Danse des Fées" so dreamily and with such a tender appreciation of its supernal beauty as to make it a true expression of Art-poetry. It was charming to be thus borne away on these delicate, airy tones, to moonlit glades in scented groves to dance and frolic, to live and love if but for a moment with these ideal creations. After this, Mr. Haner played a dashing, brilliant polka of his own, which, although a simple polka, evinced so much originality that it won for the young artist many compliments.

DEC. 20th.

This letter, delayed through inadvertence, leaves Paris in all its holiday glory. The near advent of Christmas has wonderfully enlivened the aspect of the Boulevards and public promenades, and the shop-windows display most tempting jousts and magnificent confections. The churches, too, show holiday preparation, notwithstanding the serious and deep-toned music characteristic of Advent. Already additional choral force is engaged, and at St. Roche last Sunday I recognized the strange touch of a new organist, and was charmed with the splendid voice of a new baritone who sung there for the first time. Since my *démenagement*, my close proximity to the grand old Madeleine gives me the felicitous privilege of listening every Sunday to the great classic composer Camille Saint-Saens, whose wonderful organ playing weekly attracts enraptured crowds to this magnificent Cathedral. I have heard that he has written a new Mass to be produced here on Christmas.

But I must close my letter by wishing you and all my friends, especially my musical ones, a Merry Christmas.

CECILIA.

Hotel Britannique,  
près la Madeleine.

Mr. Melbye's Studio, 756 Broadway, will be opened to the public on Saturday afternoons.

and the melodramatic music, retained a fair share of the characteristics of the music of Ireland, although he has not been strikingly successful in preserving its exquisitely plaintive, tender quaintness. Still, as a whole the "Lily of Killarney" is an admirable work, and will, we hope, win its way into popularity.

Miss Richings acted and sang the role of Eily O'Connor, with spirit and taste. Since we last heard her her voice has decidedly improved; it is smoother and sweeter, and her style is much more subdued—points which have added much to the success of her artistic efforts. She was warmly applauded throughout, and deserved it. We should like to know, however, why Miss Richings always comes out in a blaze of light? Wherever she appears she is sure to be attended by sunlight or moonlight, which, to say the least of it, is a little curious.

Mrs. E. Seguin looked very charming, and sang both fluently and tastefully. Her voice is very beautiful, and she uses it very expressively. She has become more at ease on the stage, and is to-day one of our most promising operatic artists.

Both Mr. Castle and Mr. Campbell have greatly improved by their constant public practice. Mr. Castle sang his song in the third act exquisitely. He exhibited a tender, earnest, passionate grace which fairly carried his audience by storm, and won both respect and admiration from all competent critics. We know no one who at this moment could go and do likewise. Mr. S. C. Campbell sang admirably throughout; his voice is as rich and beautiful as ever, and he has gained that ease on the stage which alone was needed to make his position assured.

Mr. Pierre Barnard has a fine voice, and sings at times exceedingly well, but his style is unsettled and needs forming. He has good natural advantages, and will doubtless aim at the highest position. The other characters were well sustained, and the chorus was generally good. The orchestra, with the exception of being generally too loud, lacking color sadly, executed the partition well. The whole was ably conducted by Mr. W. C. Deitrich.

We are promised, by this Company, during the season, the production of W. V. Wallace's beautiful opera, the "Desert Flower." We congratulate the public upon the opportunity of hearing this fine work.

#### OPENING OF PIKE'S OPERA HOUSE.

On Monday evening next, Jan. 6th, this gorgeous and beautiful Opera House will be opened to the public, by the Italian Opera Company under the management of Mr. Max Strakosch. Mr. Strakosch brings a powerful combination of attractions to inaugurate this new temple of art, which must

command success, if success is possible in such times.

Madame La Grange, the prima donna, is too well known here to need any endorsement from us, but we may say, that of all artists who have visited us, none have achieved so wide and lasting a popularity, and not one has so well deserved the proud distinction of never having once disappointed the public. In short, she is an artist of the highest ability and without reproach.

Miss Adelaide Phillips is by general consent the leading operatic contralto in the country, and has fully sustained that position, not only here but in Europe. Brignoli is beyond dispute the pet tenor of New York, and hundreds will flock to hear once more upon the stage the silver-voiced tenor.

The other artists are worthy to associate with this brilliant trio. All will recognize and welcome the names of Miss McCulloch, Miss Merrifield, Massamiani, Orlandi, Randolfi, Colletti, and Susini.

With such a company, in addition to the excitement to behold the new Opera House, a crowded and brilliant audience will witness the inauguration of Mr. Pike's new and costly enterprise.

OPENING OF PIKE'S OPERA POSTPONED.—In consequence of an accident to Signor Brignoli, the opening of Pike's Opera House is postponed until Thursday evening next, Jan. 9th.

#### RISTORI AT THE THEATRE FRANCAISE.

This great artist has drawn fashionable and crowded audiences during the present week to witness her glorious representation of Marie Antoinette, certainly the crowning glory of her brilliant career. She will give a few more representations next week, previous to her departure for Havana, so that all who have not seen her should take advantage of the last opportunities that can be afforded them.

#### NATIONAL ACADEMY OF DESIGN.

Since our last review of the Exhibition, so many new pictures have been added, and so many withdrawn, that we almost have to record a new opening.

Among the most prominent of these are three by Thomas Cole, making a series, numbered 245, 246 and 247, and entitled, "The Cross and the World." At this day, it is hardly worth while to speak critically of Cole's pictures, save to commend his genius and declare he was among the few artists who always painted with an idea. The three pictures represent the allegory of a pilgrim setting out, pursuing, and ending the journey of life. The first is that of two youths separating, one taking his way to the world, the other to the cross, each of which objects are

delineated by the artist in the sky. The second picture shows the pilgrim beset by danger and storm, but still pursuing his way, gazing steadily forward to the cross. The third gives us the aged man, having reached his journey's end, received by the trio of angels, and drawing nigh the cross. The pictures are brilliant in color, and have a breadth of imagination that courts something more than a passing glance. The pictures are for sale.

No. 603 is a portrait of Admiral Dupont, by Huntington, deserving much praise for the figure, but marred sadly by a muddy, stormy background. We cannot see any reason the artist should create a stormy sky around the Admiral's head, especially as he is not on shipboard.

Next to this, No. 602, Story has a good full length of a lady, in which the draperies and surroundings are very nicely managed, and the flesh good.

Bierstadt has added a picture, No. 254, "Mount Hood," which has all the fine technique of the artist, and all his peculiar effects, in this case somewhat exaggerated. For the purpose of showing out his snow-covered mountain in the fullest degree, he has put the main body of his picture in sombre mourning, giving us broad day in the background, morning in the foreground, and night in the middle distance.

Mr. J. A. Oertel has a strong picture, entitled "Faith," not entered on the catalogue. There is a dullness about its color, but the water is well managed.

Nos. 287 and 292 are dogs, by Mr. George B. Butler, bold and life-like, showing an understanding by the artist of the work he took in hand.

No. 293 is "October," by Ehninger, more brilliant and natural in color than the generality of this artist's pictures, and a great improvement on those he has heretofore exhibited.

No. 273, "An Afternoon in Haying Time," by J. B. Bristol, is a clever picture, warm in color and good manipulation.

No. 633 is Edwin Forbes' picture of "A Lull in the Fight at the Wilderness, May 7th, 1864." In this picture, Mr. Forbes has given us a sample of the stuff of which he is made that will not bear passing over lightly. The picture is life itself, and not imagination. The artist has seen all he paints, and gives the soldier as he is in camp, not as the majority of those who have painted scenes during the late war give him, so invested by their imagination that the reality is gone. The inevitable group of card-players; the refugees and rebs, who have just come in or been brought in; the boy in blue, who thinks almost as much of his gridiron and sauce-pan as of his shooting-iron, and carries them with him everywhere; the con-